

# The Sandpaper

Naval Air Facility  
El Centro, Ca

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"Pearl of the Desert"

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## Dr. Martin Luther King Jr

NAF celebrates a breakfast to remember

By NC1(AW/FMF) Deitrich Jones  
Command Career Counselor

On Wednesday January 15th, NAF El Centro held a Prayer Breakfast at the base galley in celebration of the 74<sup>th</sup> birthday of one of America's greatest civil rights leaders, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The guest speaker was Ms. Marian Springfield, an Educator and Lecturer from San Diego, CA. After her introduction, Mrs.

Springfield spoke about her experience in the Civil Rights movement. She soon transported the entire audience back to the 1960s as she described with deep emotion her life as young black woman during that time.

Mrs. Springfield portrayed herself as a simple country girl from Memphis, TN who grew up in a era that was filled with hate.

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# From the Commanding Officer

By CAPT Paul M. Ziegler  
CO

It has been a few months since the Sandpaper last hit newsstands here. The holiday leave period and slow down have since passed and we are now up and operating at full speed. I am truly appreciative of all the time and effort that folks put into the holiday events and also those in support of the local community. This was a most enjoyable Christmas Season. The Christmas spirit was evident by the wonderful decorations, especially with the nightly glow provided from all of the individual housing Christmas light displays.

We are in our peak period of operations, with the "Blues" in town for their pre-air show circuit training and numerous detachments fleeing their home station's winter weather to conduct their training under ideal weather conditions here at NAF. As always, support to these detachments is the priority mission. We must ensure that we are doing all we can to make ensure that they accomplish their training goals in a most efficient and effective manner.

When I last wrote in the Sandpaper, I mentioned issues and concerns that came up during my initial Captain's Calls and promised to provide feedback on where we were headed in trying to resolve them. Hopefully, by now everyone in housing has started to receive our monthly family newsletter. This is an attempt to keep everyone informed on happenings around the facility. We are working to continue to improve its content, especially in the area of an events calendar, so that families can plan earlier to participate in special MWR and other base activities. Additionally the Command Master Chief has

instituted a Quality of Life Board that will explore options and take suggestions on issues for improving services on the facility. There is always room for improvement and we will continue to work toward meeting our needs and desires, but some of the actions will take some time to complete.

With the Blue Angels in town, you all know that the NAF Air Show is just around the corner and many members of both NAF and Strike Fighter are hard at work trying to make this another exciting and fun filled air show. Mark your calendars for the 14 March Food Fest and 15 March Air Show.

Finally, I must warn everyone that recent events in the Global War on Terrorism and the possibility of military action in Iraq has caused us to increase security measures and there is the possibility that we could see further increases depending on the situation. At present we are asking that guests coming to the base be identified early enough to allow for notification of security to help ease their access onto the facility. We will do our best to minimize delays at the gate, but we must ensure that we are providing the best possible protection to our facilities, personnel and families. Please be cooperative with our sentries at the gate, they are doing their job for our sake. Ensure that you have identification ready for presentation when you approach the gate. This will minimize delays and traffic backups. All vehicles are subject



to inspection and all members of the vehicle will be checked for identification. I ask for your patience and cooperation through out the process.

In addition to the increased security measures, some members in our base community have been called up for either reserve duty or, as in the case with many of our Army personnel are being deployed to support potential and ongoing military requirements around the world. Some will leave families here on base behind during their deployments and I ask that we extend those families a helping hand with their everyday activities while their service member is away. We wish those individuals a safe deployment and a quick return to our facility.

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Photos by: LT David Rodriguez



AO2 Tanya McCarlson reenlisted at a reenlistment ceremony held at the Rock Island gazebo on January 2nd. After CDR Peter Hayes discharged her from the Navy, her husband, AME3 Anthony McCarlson, from Strike reenlisted her for six years.

McCarlson has been at NAF for the past four years and will transfer to the USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) in March of this year. Present at the ceremony were McCarlson's parents Mr. Marvin and Mrs. Tillie Johnson from Waco, Nebraska, and her 1-year old daughter Annika. McCarlson received a \$35,732 bonus.

"The money came in handy. I paid off all my school loans and bills. Now I am debt free, and I still had some left over, which I've put into my savings account."





# Celebrating Dr. King's Birthday

Continued from page 1

discontent and suppression, to become a woman of excellence. A graduate of the University of Washington, she holds a Bachelor's degree in English with emphasis in Early American Literature and a Masters of Fine Arts in Drama.



As a young activist, she was a supporter of Dr. King's philosophy of non-violence and joined the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization that believed in the same non-violent approach to gain equal rights. Mrs. Springfield marched with Dr. King when the riots broke out in Memphis and was at the Lorraine Hotel that fateful day when Dr. King was assassinated. After Dr. King's assassination she continued

to work with other Civil Rights leaders and has been associated with Mrs. Coretta King (wife of Dr. King), Jesse Jackson, Stokely Carmichael, Hosea Williams, Andrew Young and Ralph Abernathy.

She opened the breakfast with a poem by Paul Lawrence Dunbar, an African American writer, titled "An Ante-Bellum Sermon" (written in Negro dialect).

As Mrs. Springfield continued to share her experience, you could see anticipation on the faces of everyone waiting to hear what she would say next. Silence filled the room as she became emotional describing how she had just left the Lorraine Hotel where Dr. King was staying, hearing the shot and later finding out that he had been assassinated.

When asked if she could say anything to encourage us to keep the dream of Dr. King alive, what would it be? She paused for a second, smiled and quoted four lines from 'An Ante-Bellum Sermon':

**"So you see da Lawd's intention,**



Photos by: NC1 Deitrich Jones

Blue Angel's Command Master Chief, Kevin Harris congratulates Mrs. Springfield after the presentation.

**E'vah sence de worl' began,  
Was dat His almighty freedom  
Should belong to e'vah man."**

Mrs. Springfield concluded the ceremony by saying, "To commemorate his life is to teach our children, that they may teach their children, human dignity, honor, courage, commitment and self-respect and the history of the Black man of America. So that we remember where we came from and know where we need to go."

## "He's a Gringo now"

By LT David Rodriguez  
Public Affairs Officer

Those were the first words from 15-year old Monica Reyes, daughter of Staff Sgt. Joaquin Reyes from Team Shield, after witnessing her father getting sworn in as a U.S. Citizen on Friday January 24<sup>th</sup> at the Calexico East Port of Entry.

After a tedious process of applying for citizenship, his dream finally came true. That day, Reyes along with 36 other Mexican



citizens and one Honduran took the Oath of Allegiance to become American citizens before U.S. Immigration Court Judge, Dennis R. James. "It's a big load off my

back," said Reyes who had been trying to become a citizen since he joined the Army. "I feel very proud."

Following the oath the new citizens were each given a small American flag as a gift welcoming them into this country. "Thank God it's over. He deserves it," said his wife Carmen.

For more information on how to become a citizen, contact LT David Rodriguez, Legal Officer at 339-2673.



Court Judge Dennis James accompanies the Reyes family. 11-year old son David, wife Carmen, 15-year old daughter Monica and 4-year old twins Angel and Andrew (A.K.A. "Hey you, and Don't touch that.")

## Dental premium changed

### From PSD

By PN1 Wilson Quizon  
PSD Supervisor



The rates for dental premiums will change with the January 2003 premium deductions (February 2003 coverage). The rate for single premium will increase from \$7.90 to \$8.14 per month, and the family premium rate will increase from \$19.74 to \$20.35. DFAS will automatically adjust pay accounts to reflect the new premiums, which will appear on the January 2003 leave and earnings statement (LES). For more information see the United Concordia website at [www.ucci.com](http://www.ucci.com).

On a second note we would like to congratulate PN1(SW) Wilson Quizon, who was selected as PSD El Centro Sailor of the Year, for 2002 and DK3 Juanita Birge was PSD El Centros Sailor of the Quarter for the 4th QTR 2002.



# Fat Albert and the Blues are Back

By **J02 Carmichael Yopez**  
Editor

Over the next few months, all Imperial Valley residents have to do is look up to the sky to get a glimpse of the U.S. Navy's Flight Demonstration Squadron, The Blue Angels. Fat Albert and the rest of the Blues arrived at Naval Air Facility El Centro on Saturday, January 4.

After a successful air show season, which culminated in Pensacola, Fla., the 126-crewmember team, along with nine hornets and one C-130 (Fat Albert), will make their home at NAF for the next three months. "We are excited to be back in El Centro, and excited about putting together our 57<sup>th</sup> year of demonstrating naval aviation to the public," said LT Mike Blankenship, Public Affairs Officer for the Blue Angels.

A boy, who toured the base

one day, described the thundering sound of the Blue Angels as the sound of freedom. "We can hear them every time they fly over our school," he said. "We always say, that is the sound of freedom."

Blue Angel enthusiasts will be able to see the Blues soaring through the Imperial Valley skies at least twice a day, six days a week as they perform daring aerobatic maneuvers. This year three new pilots have joined the

Blues team. CDR Russ "Boss" Bartlett, Commanding Officer/team leader for the Blue Angels will be riding in jet number one. LCDR David "Varnit" Varner will be riding in jet number three, and Maj Glen "Loni" Anderson will



Photos by: PH3 Saul McSween

The Blue Angles C-130 otherwise known as Fat Albert takes to the sky during its Jet Assisted Takeoff, or (JATO) launch at NAF El Centro.



Under the rising sun, a Blue Angels crew chief inspects Blues number one prior to the days operational routine.

be riding in jet number six.

This year's NAF El Centro Air Show is scheduled for Saturday March 15, 2003. For more information contact the Public Affairs Office at (760) 339-2673/2519.



Photo by: J02 Carmichael Yopez

## Proud Mother

Aviation Ordnanceman Petty Officer 2nd Class Brandy Watson from Weapons Department is the proud mother of a handsome little boy she named Hunter Zayne Watson. Hunter was born January 11 at El Centro Memorial Hospital at 9:05 p.m. and weighed 8 pounds 11 ounces.

## Advancement Exam

E-6	6 March
E-5	13 March
E-4	20 March

Exams will be administered at the NAF Galley at 0630

## Scholarships for Military Children

### How could your child receive one?

By **Bonnie Powell**

DECA

FORT LEE, Va. - With Valentines day fast approaching, the Scholarships for Military Children program has a really "sweet" deal for military children going to college this fall. Applications for \$1,500 scholarships are due in at the nearest commissary by Feb. 21. At least one scholarship will be awarded at every commissary location with qualified applicants.

"We've made it even easier to apply this year," said program liaison Edna Hoogewind of the Defense Commissary Agency. "Everything a potential applicant needs to know is in the Frequently Asked Questions section of our scholarship page at <http://www.commissaries.com>. The application can be downloaded and filled out by hand, or filled out on the computer. Copies of the application are also available at commissaries worldwide."

The scholarship essay topic is "How has

being the child of a military service member influenced your educational goals?

The scholarship program is open to unmarried children under the age of 21, (23 if enrolled in school) of active duty personnel, Reserve, National Guard and retired military. Eligibility will be determined using the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) database. Applicants should ensure that they, as well as their sponsor, are currently enrolled in the DEERS database and that they have a current military ID card. All applicants must be citizens of the United States.

Last year 18-year old Gabrielle Pascua daughter of retired Navy Chief, Frank Pascua, won the scholarship.

The applicant must be planning to attend, or already attending, an accredited college or university full-time in the fall term of 2003. Students at community or junior colleges must be enrolled in a program of studies designed to transfer directly into a four-year program. Additional instructions can be found on the application. For more information stop by the base commissary.





# Hawaii trip winner!

By J02 Carmichael Yepez

Editor

It took only a single entry form to make Aviation Ordnanceman 2nd Class Petty Officer Richard Mauldin from Strike, the lucky winner of a six-day, five-night tropical vacation for two to Hawaii.

"I thought they were playing a prank on me," said Mauldin. "I was on leave up in the state of Washington for the Christmas holidays when I got the call on my cell phone. At first I thought it was one of the guys from Strike, but then the guy from MWR identified himself and told me it was the real deal."

Mauldin says he is happy he won the tickets and plans to take his trip by the end of March after the air show. "Neither my wife nor I have been to Hawaii, so it's going to be a great trip," said Mauldin. "When I first told her, she didn't believe me either, but now she is super excited."

The giveaway was part of an MWR regional program called "Tropical Paradise Getaway to Hawaii," in which each base in the region had a winner. The contest started November 1st and ended December 16th. Sailors had to fill out an entry form at any MWR facility on base. One entry per visit, but the more sites a Sailor visited,

Photo by: J02 Carmichael Yepez



CAPT Ziegler and MWR Director, Jerry Merguiliano present AO2 Mauldin with his Tropical Trip to Paradise certificate.

the more chances they had to win. "I only entered a single entry," said Mauldin. "The guys at the bowling alley kept asking me to register for the drawing every time I went bowling. One day I finally filled it out and thanks to them, I will soon be in a tropical paradise."

## Managing holiday and family expenses

By Dr. Lynn flowers

Family Advocacy Representative

Dealing with money is one of the biggest challenges that we face. For many of us, the expenses of the holiday season have left us with even more debts to pay off.

One of the leading causes of problems in marriages and families is money. You may have problems if you and your spouse don't agree on how to spend your money, or if you can't figure out how the money has been spent. Uncertainties regarding who balances the checkbook and when it should be balanced can be a serious issue. A good plan

for paying bills regularly is essential for the security and well being of the family.

Financial stress is one of the most common sources of stress in America. Making the military paycheck meet the family's needs isn't easy, but it can be done with good planning.

In this era of multiple credit cards, mounds of debt, and foolish spending, some people find it difficult to know where and when to draw the line. For example, buying a new vehicle is sometimes necessary. But, major purchases should not be made on an impulse. It is not unusual for people who don't make enough money to make payments to receive financing. So, don't rely on a salesperson to

make your financial decisions for you. Know what you can afford and stick to it. Also, remember the difference between your wants and your needs. "Wants" can be rather pricey.

You do not need to go through financial problems alone. If you are having financial problems, speak to your Command Financial Advisor. You can seek assistance through the Fleet and Family Support Office (extension 2241). The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society can help you with certain emergencies. The NAF El Centro point of contact for Navy Relief is at extension 2461.

## From the housing office, Pattie Crew says adios!

By Pattie Crew

Navy Housing



Speaking of home, I will have transferred to the housing department at Hurlburt Field Air Force Base in Fort Walton Beach, Florida when this article is published. I hope you will remember how important the homes you live in were to me and treat them as if they were your own. I always stress prompt reporting of repair maintenance to

the service desk and lawn care, especially programming your sprinklers.

There is a waiting list for Family Housing in the approximate range of 3-5 months. If you are a sponsor and the service member has not sent us a Housing Application (DD1746), a current page 2 and a copy of his orders, make sure you contact him/her and get the ball rolling. I hope the New Year brings you closer to your dreams. I would like all the residents and civilians to know that it's been my pleasure working for and with you, especially Cathy Harper. I will miss y'all.

As always, "Take care of yourselves

and take care of your shipmates." Lastly, I would like to congratulate the following Christmas Decoration winners:

Bldg. 4002

DKSN Erica Madrid

Officer Category

LT David Rodriguez

Senior Enlisted Category

SFC Ernie Tipace

Junior Enlisted Category

HM2 Helvis Ortiz

RV Park

Lloyd and Simone Mabrey



Santa arrived at the Holiday party on Big Red.



The Lion King also took part in playing musical chairs.



There were activities for everyone including the little ones.



Down to the last two in musical chairs.

# NAF El Centro celebrates

**By JO2 Carmichael Yopez**

*Editor*

The only thing missing at Naval Air Facility El Centro during the holiday season was the little white flakes that fall from the sky and that famous reindeer with the red shiny nose. But that didn't matter, because Santa Clause still found his way and made it to the NAF El Centro Holiday party and Christmas Parade. "HO HO HO," he said as he jumped off his giant red sleigh to greet the children.

He made his first appearance on Sunday December 8, as he arrived in his fire truck sleigh to the Christmas Party at the base gym, where more than one hundred children waited anxiously. Without wasting time, he soon took to his favorite place and sat by the tree



Even the little sleepy ones had a chance to take a picture with Santa.



Anxious to shake Santa's hand everyone was happy to see him.



"Um, um I want a skateboard". That was this little boy's wish to Santa. "Oh and a soldier gun, and a GI Joe, and a Super Nintendo and um ..."





# the Holiday Season

as the little ones lined up to tell him what they wanted for Christmas. It was a great event thanks to the folks at MWR and the Snowbirds who volunteered to help Santa. The children enjoyed a variety of games including face painting and many other activities.

The following Wednesday, the El Centro Annual Christmas Parade took place. "This has been our biggest and most successful parade yet," said Gloria Ortiz from MWR. "This year we had 45 entries, which was ten more than last year," Ortiz added. The Mas-

ter of Ceremonies was Radio Announcer Gene Brister from KXO radio. The parade culminated with the lighting of the Christmas tree, presentation of awards and refreshments.

The parade winners were as follows:

Captain's Choice

*Phil Swing School Drill Team,*

*from Brawley*

Children's Award

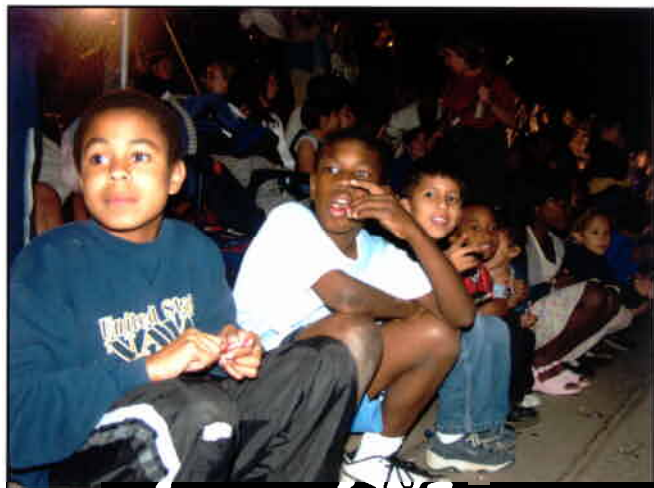
*Kellog Brown and Root Services*

XO's Choice

*Hazmat*



Someone had to scoop the poop.



Spectators including these children lined up on B street to see the parade.



Baton twirling girls from one of the local schools.

Photos by:  
LT David Rodriguez  
and  
JO2 Carmichael Yopez



KXO Radio Personality Gene Brister served as the MC for the parade.



The NAF El Centro Sea Cadet unit has become popular in all the local parades.



Left: MWR's Grinch in his late model sleigh. Right: the Weapons Santa in his electric sleigh.





## Home on wheels



Bill and Irene Ables are from Medina, Ohio. But NAF El Centro has become their second home for the past 22 years.



The living room extends to 12-feet wide.



Mrs. Ables in her kitchen, which includes a full size microwave, oven and refrigerator. This home on wheels also comes with a washer and dryer.



The back room also extends allowing for a queen size bed.

## Snowbirds receive warm welcome

By JO2 Carmichael Yezpez

Editor

More than 4000 pancakes flew off the grill at this year's 18<sup>th</sup> annual Snowbird Breakfast sponsored by the El Centro Chamber of Commerce.

Like the Sandhill Crane and the Lark Sparrow birds, which are regular winter visitors, the Snowbirds or Recreational Vehicles owners (RV'ers), also make a yearly migration to the Imperial Valley to enjoy the warm winter weather of the region.

They come from all over the United States and Canada, creating their own communities in RV-Parks from the Imperial Valley to Yuma and from Palm Springs to San Felipe in the Gulf of Cortez, Mexico.

Chamber of Commerce President, Richard Acosta, said "The Snowbirds bring a lot of business to the community. Last year we had about 1800 Snowbirds attend the breakfast, but this year it seems we have more. We do this breakfast to give back to the Snowbirds who give a lot to our community. They buy gas, food, shop at our businesses; it is a big boost to our economy."



NAF El Centro Snowbirds, the Russell's, the Ables and Worthers at the Snowbird breakfast.

"We love your sunshine," said Freda Wiebe, an RV'er from Sylvan Lake in Alberta, Canada, who, along with her husband, spends the winter season here in the valley. "This breakfast is wonderful. The people here are very nice. We love coming here."

Naval Air Facility El Centro is also host to some of these Snowbirds, retired military Snowbirds, that is. "We love coming here every year," said Jon Russell a retired Sailor from Seattle WA.

"It is very convenient for us," said Bill Ables, a resident of Medina Ohio, and a retired



Volunteers from the Chamber served breakfast.

Marine Master Gunnery Sergeant.

"The base is very secure and the fact that we have access to all the facilities like the gym, the pools, the commissary and the medical clinic make it a perfect place for us to stay. But perhaps the most important fact remains that we are with comrades and everyone knows what we are talking about," Ables added.

Ables, who served 20 years in the Marines and 20 years in the reserves says he and his wife Irene, a retired teacher, love living in their 36-foot motor home. They live in full comfort and with all the amenities they have at home. They have two 20" TVs, VCR, DVD player, satellite, phone, washer and dryer, and a queen size bed. For being in a motor home it looks more like a penthouse on wheels. Their RV has stretch out sections that convert to a 12 by 16 combined kitchen and living room area. "We love it," said Mrs. Ables as she opened the full size refrigerator in her kitchen. The Ables have been making their yearly trip from Ohio for the past 22 years and plan on making the trip for another 20.

"They are a great asset to our base," said Executive Officer Peter Hayes. "They are some of our best volunteers assisting with all our base events."

"We help with the Christmas Parade, church events and the air show," said George and Susan Ferguson, who are currently running the base Thrift Shop. The Ferguson's have been avid volunteers for the past 15 years since they started coming to NAF.

The base has a total of 84 RV spaces all of which are currently occupied. For more information on how to reserve a space call the MWR office at (760) 339-2486.





# High-speed game initiates Captain's Cup season

**By JO2 Carmichael Yopez**  
*Editor*

Slam-dunking high speed flying balls was the name of the game for the first group of teams in this year's Captain's Cup Tournament, which initiated with wallyball in mid January.

Wallyball, is a sport similar to volleyball, but played in a racquetball court. Because the players are allowed to bounce the ball off the sidewalls, the game is a fast pace high-speed energy game.

"I got to tell you, it is fast," said LT Ernuel Miranda, Supply Officer. "This is the first time I

played, and the game had me going. You can slam the ball off the walls; it's crazy, but it's a lot of fun."

Ten teams have signed up for this year's season totaling nearly 70 players.

Wallyball's last game will be played on Tuesday February 11, where the winner will be named champion. Games are played Tuesday and Thursday's from 5 to 8 p.m. For more information on Captain's Cup games and other sports events, contact Sports Coordinator, Laurie Bauer at Ext 2331.



HM3 Jason Bonney leaps into the air to block Javier Gurtierrez from a spike.

## Youth bowling league begins with a strike



Eight-year old Shane Walker nails a perfect strike.

**By JO2 Carmichael Yopez**  
*Editor*

The youth bowling league started with more than a few strikes as Bowling Manager Rick Woods signed more than 20 children to the league on Saturday Jan. 5.

"We had a great turn out," said Woods. "And next week we are expecting more kids to sign on. During the next few months, they will learn bowling techniques and safety. For the younger children,

we just expect them to have a lot of fun."

For more than two hours that day, kids ranging in ages from 5 to 17 kept the bowling balls rolling down the lanes. "I always bowl with my dad," said 8-year old Shane Walker after nailing a perfect strike. "We always compete together, but this is the first time I will bowl in a league, it's a lot of fun."

Volunteer Coach, PN1 Wilson

Quizon, said he had a lot of fun helping out with the kids. "We have a good time here. It's good for the kids because they interact with others, and make a lot of friends."

From the beginner to the more experienced bowler, the continuous sound of falling pins kept the young ones cheering and jumping with joy. For others, it was a stomp with a grimacing gesture in disapproval of their shot's fate.

For 10-year old Xavier Covillon who scored a 154, the highest game of the day, it was a confident grin the entire time. As I watched him bowl, he played with a professional bowling poise for a young boy. When he grabbed the ball, he brought it to his chin and aimed with concentration as if he had been doing this all his life. He would then approach the lane, come to a complete stop, swing his right arm to the rear and unwind releasing the ball. For a brief moment he would remain motionless, his body at an angle with his right leg behind him a few inches off the ground. "Yea" he



11-year old Daniel Martinez, left, shows his friend how to add up the scores.



10-year old Xavier Covillon played like a pro.

said with a big smile. "I've bowled here before, but this will be the first time I bowled in a league, so I'm going to try for some good scores."

The league meets Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and is scheduled to end Saturday March 22nd. Cost is \$2.50 per meet, which includes shoes and two games.

For more information call the bowling alley and ask for Rick Woods, bowling manager at 2575.



# Honor Guard pays tribute to American Hero



Photos by: AO3 Tiant Foreman

The El Centro Honor Guard provided full Funeral Service Honors.

By **CM2 Eric Magee**

Staff Writer

Shots broke the silence in the air. It was a 21-gun salute

paying tribute to a true American Hero. This was part of the ceremony in which the El Centro Honor Guard participated

rendering full funeral honors to Machinist's Mate Chief Alfred Larsen who was laid to rest on Saturday January 11.

Larsen served in the Navy during World War II and attained the rank of Chief Petty Officer before retiring. John's grandson, also a Navy Chief and Navy Seal, stationed in New Orleans called NAF El Centro to report that his grandfather had passed away. The Honor Guard volunteered to pay tribute and provide military honors in the funeral ceremony. His two daughters who shared their personal memories during the eulogy described him as "always positive and uplifting" and a person with a "positive outlook on life." Petty Officer 3rd Class Jennifer Carlson from NAF

El Centro Security Department described the funeral as "very moving."

John who was 94, spent part of his retirement years traveling in his recreational vehicle with his wife by his side. He would always say, "My wife is my copilot." At the funeral Larsen was given full honors. After the 21-gun salute his daughters were presented with American flag. He was buried at Evergreen Cemetery in El Centro.



# The eggs from the future

By **JO2 Carmichael Yopez**

Editor

They are not exactly from the future, but they look like they could come out of a futuristic science fiction movie. I'm talking about those egg shaped electric vehicles that are now circulating around the base.

In the past, electric vehicles were little more than golf carts. Most of them were square and did not have an attractive appearance. On base they have been used mostly for ground and maintenance crews, or strictly on the golf course. They were slow, topping off at 15 miles per hour, so they weren't convenient for getting from place to place without slowing down traffic. But with the new millennium and the quest for efficient means to



Photos by: JO2 Carmichael Yopez

The GEM car has become a popular mode of transportation since their arrival to NAF.

conserve energy and the environment, these new Global Electric Motorcars, or "GEM" cars have been popping up all over campuses, and small resort type neighborhoods as transportation vehicles.

"They're cool and fun to drive," said Donna Coon, Command Evaluator, who drives one

of the eight GEM cars given to the base. "They are cost effective and very convenient."

The cars are equipped with such safety features such as seat belts, safety-glass windshield, windshield wipers, hydraulic brakes, a horn and front and rear turn signals. The GEM car can travel at speeds up to 25



AO1 Rocky Loomis and AOAN Justin Hall on one of NAF's oldest golf carts.

mph, which makes it a perfect driving vehicle on base.

According to Dale Hunt, Transportation Officer, Naval Facilities received around 300 of these vehicles of which NAF El Centro received eight. "Everybody is very pleased with them, and so am I," said Hunt.

The GEM car, (egg, or bubble car as some people have dubbed them) can travel approximately 35 miles on a charge. It only requires a three-pronged extension cord and a regular 110 outlet. "The

vehicle should never be allowed to get below a 30 percent charge," said Hunt. "The best thing to do, is to plug them in every chance you get."

Each department that has custody of one, must conduct a monthly planned maintenance inspection (PMI) and submit it to Dale Hunt. "If anything goes wrong with the GEM cars, personnel should contact me," said Hunt.

In places like San Diego, the GEM cars have been popping up as taxis and delivery cars in the Gas Lamp district, where the speed limit is 25 miles per hour. "The fact that there are no doors makes you feel like you are actually going faster," said Gabrielle Steinau, Admin Supervisor. "They are a fun and convenient way to get from here to there."





Photos by: LT Michael O'Beirne



By Lt Michael O'Beirne Public Works Dept.

## New Transient Barracks

Soltek Pacific has ramped up their construction efforts over the last months on the new \$16 million transient barracks. Work is progressing steadily, with the current focus on exterior masonry and sheet metal decking work.

The Housing Director is currently working with interior designers to finish up an interior design package. The Grand Opening scheduled for the mid-August timeframe.

The Public Affairs Office is asking for suggestions for a name for the new building.



## Wherry Housing Playground

NAF El Centro recently opened a new \$125,000 state-of-the-art playground in Wherry Housing. It was installed by Miracle Playgrounds and includes the most advanced safety features used in playgrounds today. The playground includes a rock climbing wall, swings, slides and a toddler area with a canopy. The matting consists of a 3-inch processed rubber tire matting system used for safety purposes to cushion impact.



## SEABEES

The Self Help Program at Naval Air Facility continues to do a great job on this installation. With direct support from all levels, we have accomplished a multitude of projects that have saved the Navy \$221,600 dollars over the past year.

Despite limited resources, and an

extremely small staff, we have executed a wide array of projects, and take great pride in the Self Help program. If you or your department would like to find out just how to tap the valuable resources of the Seabee Self Help Program call BU1 (SCW) Oliphant at Ext. 2317, or LT O'Beirne at Ext. 2214. No idea is too big, or project too small.



## Hot Fuel Pits/Runway Repair

Over the Christmas Break, the Public Works Department and the Resident Officer in Charge of Construction coordinated with five contractors to complete a \$1 million work project in just 2 weeks. The largest of these projects included the replacement of three hot fuel pit lanes and a 25-foot joint on the primary runway. Baldi-Brothers, from San Diego, erected a concrete batch plant on base to use for the massive project. Other airfield work included repairs to the runways such as asphaltting around the arresting gear, placing of a fog seal on the shoulder of the runway and maintenance removal of rubber. The repairs will improve our operational capabilities and further enhance training capabilities at NAFEC.

## Maintenance on the Water Tower

The 150-foot water tower was recently repainted by Scrub-A-Home, Inc. under a subcontract to Kellogg Brown & Root (KBR). The tank was painted with a high quality paint using International Aviation Orange and White. A Special shroud apparatus was used to surround the tank to catch paint flakes being removed during the



surface preparation. The inside of the water tank also received repair and cleaning, as well as a waterproof membrane.



## Renovations to Strike Fighter

Southbay, Inc. has nearly completed renovations to the Strike Fighter Maintenance Unit Buildings under a multi-trade delivery order. The renovations included the replacement of outdated 1960' wood paneling with texture coated sheet rock, brand new tile floor and ceiling tile.



Photos by: JO2 Carmichael Yezep

## Attention to Quarters

Quarters was held on Thursday January 23, at which Executive Officer CDR Peter Hayes,

presented the following awards. Far left: LT Michael O'Beirne (P/W) received a NAM, ITC Jon McPherson received a LOA, AO1 Rocky Loomis(Weps) received a LOC and AO2 Richard Hopkins (Weps) received a NAM.

## How would you like to write for the Sandpaper?

The Sandpaper is always looking to hear from Sailors and civilians who have a story to tell. Tell us about an event that is happening in your corner of the world. Tell us about a fun place you've been. There's a lot of new people to the area who would like to know what there is to do around here.

We love to hear about volunteer projects, awards, promotions and any other event that is of interest to our military community. Stories can be emailed, or dropped off at the Public Affairs Office.

Children are also invited to submit stories. For more information contact the Public Affairs Office at 339-2519, or 2673.



Photos by: LT David Rodriguez

## Retired after 20 years of honorable service

Yeoman Chief Michael Merrick retired on Friday January 10, 2002 in a retirement ceremony at the base gym. Top left: AO2 Chris McClure presents Merrick with the National Ensign. Center: YN1 Michael Martin relieves Merrick of the watch. Right: Merrick speaks about his career in the Navy. Left: ITCM(SW) Douglas Lattimer presents Merrick with a shadow box.

# Welcome Aboard!

Welcome aboard to our new Sailors and their families.

From left to right back row:

AN Morgan Douglas (Weps), AC3 John Pettigrove (Ops), AOAR Elias Gomez (Weps), SK1 Jose Montano (Sec), AC2 Seth Thompson (Ops), AMEAN Damon Powell (Strike) BM3 Michael Valdez (P/W), AK2 Anna Marie O'Quinn (Sec). From left to right front row:

BM2 Rex Jump (Sec), HM2 Lizette Aznavoorian (Med), AC3 James Bonine, (Ops), AD2 Ceferino Javier (Strike), AC2 Lorenzo Lopez (Ops).



Photo by: LT David Rodriguez



On 31 January, LT Josh Gates was promoted to LCDR at a pinning ceremony held at the Mirage Club. CAPT Ziegler and the XO, CDR Hayes pinned on the gold oak leaves. Gates is the Assistant Operations Officer for NAF El Centro.